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SALT TWO
SESSION I
A- 81

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
U.S. SALT DELEGATION
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

DATE: 12 December 1972

TIME: 1210 - 1300 Hours

PLACE: USSR Mission, Geneva

SUBJECT: Post-plenary; Aircraft Carriers/SLBM Submarines

PARTICIPANTS: US

USSR

Lt General R. B. Allison
Captain S. A. Chernay
(Interpreter)

Lt General K. A. Trusov
Lt General I. I. Beletsky
Lt Colonel A. A. Chesnokov

General Trusov said the statement I presented today was quite interesting, substantial and important, and hoped that this will be a first step in bringing our divergent views closer together. I said that exchanging views is not only helpful but necessary and I hoped he in turn would address some of the questions which I had asked earlier and which remain unanswered -- for example, the matter of verifiability by national means of such Soviet proposals as banning nuclear weapons aboard bombers.

Trusov said that the verification question was most difficult to answer, and we may need to consider Shchukin's view that certain proposals may need to be addressed even though they may not be verifiable. Trusov continued that the Soviet proposal of limiting long range ASMs and bombers is verifiable.

I reminded Trusov that in SALT we have sought measures verifiable by national technical means and I said that each side must keep in mind the verification implications of its proposals. The limitations must be verifiable.

General Beletsky asked for my view on the Soviet proposal to withdraw all aircraft carriers beyond a range from which carrier based aircraft could not reach the territory of the other side. I told Beletsky that the aircraft aboard these carriers are general purpose and dual purpose aircraft. This package of forces (e. g., fighters, fighter bombers, reconnaissance aircraft) is equipped to conduct various types of operations and to support other ships at sea. The U. S. does not consider these forces as strategic.

State Dept. review completed

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Beletsky said that movement of aircraft carriers to an area from which the carriers' aircraft can strike the territory of the other side brings about a change in the strategic balance. Thus, it is impossible to agree with the U.S. that carrier based aircraft do not have a strategic capability and he does not understand the U.S. definition of strategic systems.

I reiterated that the U.S. side has made it clear that FBS -- which are forces deployed in support of our alliances -- are not the forces that brought the two sides to the negotiating table. Our two countries began these discussions because of concern regarding the build-up of strategic ballistic missile systems and heavy bombers, and the growth of defensive systems. As for the strategic balance, I told Beletsky that there are many elements that can influence a strategic situation. As an example, the landing of a battalion of paratroopers in a key area could have a strategic effect in a given situation but this is not to say these are strategic offensive forces. We are not here to discuss the general purpose forces that the U.S. has deployed; we're here to discuss strategic nuclear offensive arms.

Trusov said he is convinced that the U.S. has taken a very hard line not to limit carrier based aircraft, but the arguments presented by the U.S. side are not convincing ones and he hoped that during the course of the discussion the Soviet side will be able to persuade the U.S. to a different point of view. Trusov said the Soviet side does not wish to limit all carrier based aircraft but only attack aircraft, capable of striking the territory of the other side. Trusov continued that the combat radius of these aircraft is not very important, as they can easily reach 1000 KM inside the territory of the other side when launched from carriers stationed just outside this territory.

Trusov turned to SLBMs and said that our discussion must include the withdrawal, by both sides, of the SLBM submarines beyond agreed limits, as this would be within the principle of equal security. He said the withdrawal of SLBM submarines would remove the potentiality of an unauthorized SLBM launch, preclude a surprise attack, and provide a basis for mutual trust.

I said the location of an SLBM submarine is relative in many respects -- recently the USSR tested an SLBM that has a range capability to strike the other side from its home port.

Trusov did not respond to my last statement.

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I told Trusov and Beletsky when we started our negotiations, both sides seemed desirous of arriving at limitations which would be simple, understandable and verifiable. I said the Soviet side was now introducing proposals that are unverifiable and unclear as to specification.

Trusov said the withdrawal of SLBM submarines is verifiable. As the discussion was breaking up, Trusov said he would like to discuss cruise missiles during our next post-plenary discussion.



SALDEL: Lt General Royal B. Allison, USAF
16 December 1972

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